

# JAPAN VICE PROVINCE

## MISSION CONGRESS

LIFE AND MISSION ACCORDING TO NEW CCRR

Moderator

Ronald LaFramboise, OMI



Fukuoka

March 21-24, 1982

# PREPARATORY PHASE



1982



August 26, 1981  
Itami

Fellow Oblates,

The last two issues of the Newsletter have announced the Provincial Congress scheduled for next spring and the preparatory phase that will be carried out in the districts.

The committee on the Constitutions and Rules has made a tentative time schedule. This is being sent to you with this letter as well as an outline to aid prayer and reflection for the first district meetings. Outlines for the other meetings will be sent to you later.

A basic goal of the Congress is to reflect together on our life and mission in the light of the revised Constitutions and Rules. The particular goals will be made known to us by the Holy Spirit through the District meetings. The particular agenda of the congress will therefore be evolved by the committee using the information coming from the district meetings.

We will be using only Part 1 of the new Text. If perchance you have misplaced the xerox copy that was sent to you earlier this year, another copy can be provided.

"Today, listen to the voice of the Lord...." (Ps. 95

For the committee,

Ron LaFramboise, O.M.I.



January 5, 1982  
Itami

Dear fellow Oblates,

The committee on the Constitutions and Rules met in Itami December 10th to review the work of the district meetings on Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the preparation for the March Congress. We are happy that the work is moving along smoothly and decided on two tasks for the Phase 3 district meetings in January.

TASK 1: From the enclosed list of "Areas of Challenge for the Vice-Province of Japan", choose one (or two, at the most) area that you find most urgent for us to deal with at the March Congress, and report your choice at the January district meeting.

Task 2: Using the outline for district meetings of Phase 1 and Phase 2:

1-READ and PRAY over Const. and Rules Part One, Chapter 2, Sections 2 and 3.

(Section 2: "Living in Faith" Const. 30 to 35, Rules 24 to 29.

Section 3: "Apostolic Community" Const. 36 to 43, Rules 30 to 36.)

2-WRITE your own private notes (prior to the meeting) answering the following questions.

a-What are the most important points for you in these two sections.

b-What do you find most challenging to you personally in these sections.

c-What do you find most challenging in these sections for the Province, here and today.

3-SHARE the above with the members of your district at the January district meeting.

We wish to encourage an even deeper atmosphere of prayer during the work before the district meeting and during the meeting itself. It is only in prayer that we can "hear His voice".

With best wishes for the New Year and looking forward to a very lively and fruitful Congress, praying that the Lord give us the grace to take a giant leap forward.

For the committee,

*Ron*  
Ron LaFramboise, O.M.I.

## AREAS OF CHALLENGE FOR THE VICE-PROVINCE OF JAPAN

During the last two district meetings the following articles of the Constitutions and Rules were signaled out as presenting challenges to the Vice-Province of Japan. The committee has grouped them together under headings listed A to H. Prior to the January district meeting please select one (or two at the most) that you feel is most urgent for us to deal with at the Provincial Congress in March. If you feel some other article is more important, you may add it to the list.

### A-PARTICIPATION

Rule 1: "...All members are to participate in the planning and orientation of the apostolate..."

Const. 26: "As individuals and as a community, we have the responsibility to seek the will of God. Decisions which express this will are best reached after prayerful community discernment."

Rule 20: "In major decisions and in matters concerning the life and mission of the whole community, there will be a process of discernment conducive to consensus."

Rule 4: "Faithfulness to our Oblate vocation must guide us in our missionary enterprises and in accepting pastoral assignments.

"Each Province will apply this concern as a guideline in establishing its priorities and in determining which ministries to accept within its own boundaries. The same concern will also serve as a criterion in the periodic re-evaluation of our apostolic commitments."

### B-UNITY and SUPPORT

Const. 1: "The call of Jesus Christ...brings us together in the Congregation..."

Const. 3: "The call and the presence of the Lord among us today bind us together...to create anew in our lives the Apostles' unity with him and their common mission in his Spirit."

Const. 28: "We will help each other find joy and fulfillment in our community life and in our apostolate, supporting one another..."

Const. 18: "We will find our support in friendship and in fraternal life, in apostolic commitment to all, in self-denial and in prayer."

Rule 11: "Oblates will endeavour to help each other grow in maturity."

## C-LAYMEN

Rule 6: "We shall support lay people in discerning and developing their own talents and charisms, encouraging them to undertake ministries and apostolic commitments, and thus shoulder the responsibilities which are properly theirs in the Christian community."

## D-POOR and JUSTICE

Const. 5: "Wherever we work, our mission is especially to those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces; we give them our preference."

Rule 9: "Action on behalf of justice is an integral part of evangelization."

Const. 21: "...it is essential for our religious institute to give collective witness to evangelical detachment."

"We are to avoid all luxury, all appearance of luxury, all immoderate gain and accumulation of possessions."

Rule 15: "The house and Provinces will be solicitous in sharing their resources with Oblates working in poorer areas and in missions with fewer material goods."

Rule 14: "The community, however, will not hesitate to make use of what it has, even of what is necessary for its sustenance, to benefit God's poor, placing its trust in Divine Providence."

## E-PROPHETS

Const. 9: "We are members of the prophetic Church. While recognizing our own need for conversion, we bear witness to God's holiness and justice."

Rule 10: "In all our ministries, prophetic voices must not be stifled, When they arise, they will be heard, tested, and supported."

Const. 11: "Our mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to seek it before all else."..."Growing in faith, hope and love, we commit ourselves to be a leaven of the Beatitudes at the heart of the world."

## F-MISSION COOPERATION

Const. 6: "We coordinate our activity with the overall pastoral plan of local Churches and collaborate in a spirit of brotherhood with others who work for the Gospel in the same region."

## G-MISSION and CULTURE

Const. 7: "We have as our goal to establish Christian communities and Churches deeply rooted in the local culture and fully responsible for their development and growth."

Const. 8: "We will ever be close to the people with whom we work, taking into account their values and aspirations."

Rule 8: "We must always be sensitive to the mentality of the people, drawing on the riches of their culture and religious traditions."

## H-LIFE and MISSION

Const. 25: "Our life is governed by the demands of our apostolic mission and by the calls of the Spirit already dwelling in those to whom we are sent. Our work makes us dependent on others in many ways. This requires real detachment from our own will and a deep sense of the Church."

Is there any other area of challenge you feel more urgent for us to deal with at the Congress? If so, indicated the related numbers of the Const. and Rules.



February 25, 1982  
Itami

Dear fellow Oblates,

We are sending you with this letter directions to go to the Passionist Retreat house in Fukuoka, and a paper entitled "Questions to Think About".

The committee on the Const. and Rules met earlier this month to review the work done in the districts in preparation for the congress. We decided on "Life and Mission" as the theme. We feel this embraces the major concerns expressed in the district meetings. The paper "Questions..." is an attempt to outline the areas of challenge for the Vice-Province as expressed by you in the districts, and the corresponding articles of the C&R that were cited as embodying those challenges. We hope that these questions will help you to channel your thoughts and reflection before the Congress.

The program of the meeting will be built around the major headings listed in the "Questions...." paper. The committee will meet again March 4th to finalize the methodology of the congress.

During your personal preparation we suggest that you try to find some detailed and concrete answers to the "Questions....", so that the discussions during the congress will result in some specific and practical conclusions for action.

Looking forward to seeing you in Fukuoka.

For the committee,

*Ron*

Ron LaFramboise, O.M.I.

P.S. Those who need financial assistance for travel to Fukuoka, please contact Bert.

HOW TO GO TO THE PASSIONIST RETREAT HOUSE IN FUKUOKA:

福岡市西区

月江町 148

福岡黙想の家

Fukuoka Mukuso No Ie

148 Katae Machi

Nishi-ku, Fukuoka

Tel. 092-871-7108

If you are coming by plane:

Take the Airport Limousine Bus  
from the airport to TENJIN.

If you are coming by train:

Take any bus from Hakata  
Station to TENJIN.

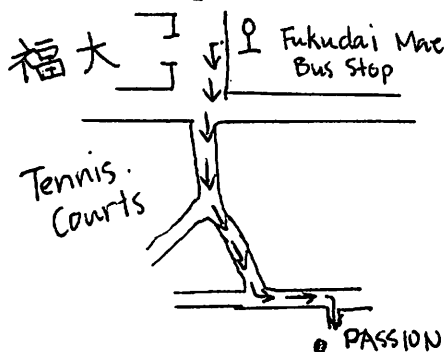
From TENJIN, take either Bus No. 12 or 60 to FUKU DAI MAE (Fukuoka Daigaku Mae), the nearest bus stop from the Retreat House. Below are two schedule (weekdays and Sundays) of buses that leave from Tenjin:

平日	天神(協和ビル前)				〇印は	発車時刻
行先	⑫ 片江	協和ビル前	大森	大森	〇印は	協和ビル前
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7	⑬ ⑭					05 21 31 41 51
8	05 07 18 20 28 30 38 41 42 5 50 53 56	05 15 50	05 22 25 28 31 34	05 29 32 35 38		05 15 25 35 45 55
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11	04 24 32 44 52	14			10 20 23 31 43 53	
12	04 14 34 44	24	54		11 12 22 32 42	
13	04 14 34 44 54	24			02 17 31 43	
14	04 14 22 30 38	48	54		12 11 13 22 32 43 53	
15	04 14 24 44	34	54		12 22 32 40 53	
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17	04 14 22 30 38 44 54				03 10 20 32 43 53	
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備考					○印は片江	

From the FUKU DAI MAE bus stop, follow the map below to the retreat house:



Those arriving early and would like to go to Hikarigaoka Church may take the Nishitetsu train from Tenjin to KASUGABARU Station or take a cab and go to the direction of Kasugabaru Station by Chikushi Doori. Dial 581-0570 if you are lost!

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1-Interplay of LIFE & MISSION

Const. 25 "Our life is governed by the demands of our apostolic mission and by the calls of the Spirit already dwelling in those to whom we are sent. Our work makes us dependent on others in many ways. This requires real detachment from our own will and a deep sense of the Church."

Rule 31 "Apostolic works and the demands of authentic religious life will be the determining factors... in the community's life-style and means of support."

-Is my life and mission, as described in the Const. and Rules well integrated?

-Do I experience a dichotomy between life and mission?

-If so, what can I do about it? What can we do about it?

-What does "to share in His mission" (Const. 1) mean to me?

2-LIFE

Const. 28 "...We will help each other find joy and fulfillment in our community life and in our apostolate, supporting one another...."

Const. 18 "We will find our support in friendship and in fraternal life, in apostolic commitment to all, in self-denial and in prayer."

Const. 30 "We achieve unity in our life only in and through Jesus Christ. Our ministry involves us in a variety of tasks, yet each act in life is an occasion for a personal encounter with the Lord who through us gives himself to others, and through others gives himself to us."

"While maintaining within ourselves an atmosphere of silence and inner peace, we seek his presence in the hearts of the people and in the vents of daily life, as well as in the Word of God, in the sacraments and in prayer. We are pilgrims, walking with Jesus in faith, hope and love."

Const. 36 "We fulfill our mission in and through the community to which we belong...."

"By growing in unity of heart and mind, we bear witness before the world that Jesus lives in our midst and unites us in order to send us out to proclaim God's reign."

-How do we help each other find joy and fulfillment in our community life and apostolate?

-How do we support one another?

-How do I support the Oblates around me? How do they support me?

-Am I satisfied with the program of life and prayer in my community (house or district)? Can it be improved? How?

-How does the Lord give himself to me through others?

-How do I seek his presence in the hearts of the people and events of daily life?

### 3-MISSION

#### a) Laymen:

Rule 6 "We shall support lay people in discerning and developing their own talents and charisms, encouraging them to undertake ministries and apostolic commitments, and thus shoulder the responsibilities which are properly theirs in the Christian community."

Rule 35 "In various places lay people feel called to participate directly in the Oblate mission, ministry and community. The terms of their association can be drawn up at the Provincial level, in agreement with the General Administration."

Const. 6 "...Finally, in our hope for the coming of God's reign, we join also with all those who, without acknowledging Christ as Lord, nevertheless, love what he loves."

-How do I as an individual support lay people in discerning and developing their own talents and charisms?

-How does the Province do this?

-Are there any lay persons (christian or non-christian) sharing in my apostolate? How do they share?

-How can I develop awareness in the laity of the ministries to which they are called in the Church?

#### b) Marginalized:

Const. 5 "We are a missionary Congregation. Our principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. We preach the Gospel among people who have not yet received it and help them to see their own values in its light. Where the Church is already established, our commitment is to those groups it touches least.

"Wherever we work, our mission is especially to those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces; we give them our preference."

Rule 8 "We will let our lives be enriched by the poor and the marginalized as we work with them, for they can make us hear in new ways the Gospel we proclaim. We must always be sensitive to the mentality of the people, drawing on the riches of their culture and religious traditions."

Rule 9: "Action on behalf of justice is an integral part of evangelization....

"Whatever, their work, however, Oblates will collaborate, be every means compatible with the Gospel, in changing all that is a cause of oppression and poverty...."

-Who are the marginalized around me?

-Is the Province sufficiently aware of and involved in work for the marginalized? If so, how? If not, in what way can we become more involved?

-What action on behalf of justice have you taken in the past month?

c) Collective witness of Life and Mission:

Const. 21 "The Spirit prompted the first Christians to share everything. Under the influence of that same Spirit we hold all things in common. Our members adopt a simple life style, remembering that it is essential for our religious institute to give collective witness to evangelical detachment.

"We are to avoid all luxury, all appearance of luxury, all immoderate gain and accumulation of possessions. Subject to the common law of labour, and each in his own way contributing to the support of the community and its apostolate, we gladly accept the fact of not having at our disposal the comforts we might like."

Const. 36 "...By growing in unity of heart and mind, we bear witness before the world that Jesus lives in our midst and unites us in order to send us out to proclaim God's reign."

-What kind of image do we Oblates in Japan project?

Rich?	Poor?
United?	Disunited?
Real?	Fake?
Prayerful?	Prayerless?
Possessive?	Detached?

d) Mission and culture:

Const. 8: "We will ever be close to the people with whom we work, taking into account their values and aspirations. To seek out new ways for the Word of God to reach their hearts often calls for daring; to present Gospel demands in all clarity should never intimidate us...."

Rule 8 "....We must always be sensitive to the mentality of the people, drawing on the riches of their culture and religious traditions."

-What values and aspirations do I see in Japan that could be integrated into my life and into the life of the Christian community?

-How do I integrate them?

-How do we Oblates deepen our knowledge and appreciation of the riches of Japanese culture and Japanese religious traditions?

-What aspects of Japanese culture and religious traditions can be integrated into our lives and mission?

-Am I taking into account the values and aspirations of the people with whom I work?

# Oblate Congress 1982 - Program



March 7, 1982  
Itami

Dear fellow Oblates,

The committee on the Constitutions and Rules met last week to finalize the plans for the Congress which is just two weeks away. We wish to communicate to you the general outline of the two and a half day session as well as a few "o-negai".

## General Outline:

March 21 (Sun.) PM Arrival in Fukuoka

March 22 (Mon.)

AM Discussion on "Interplay of Life and Mission"

PM Discussion on "Life"

March 23 (Tues.)

AM Discussion on "Laymen" and "Collective Witness of Life and Mission".

PM -Discussion on "Marginalized" and "Mission and Culture".

-25th Ordination Anniversary Jubilee Mass  
(Tom Maher and Ed Williams)

March 24 (Wed.)

AM -Reaping the fruits  
-Closing session

## "O-negai":

- Please bring: 1-Your copy of Const. & Rules.
- 2-Japanese Breviary (Romanized texts will be available)
- 3-Alb and Stole.

-Please go over the "Questions to Think About" paper once more.

## Services:

The following men have agreed to offer their services to make our meeting orderly, meaningful and pleasant.

-Welcoming Committee: Wency Laguidao

-Liturgy and Prayer: Ed Williams



-Chairman: Ron LaFramboise

-Secretaries: Fran Hahn and Jack Deely

-Printing: Jan Van Hoydonck  
(He will also crack backs and stiff  
necks!)

-Leisure: Wency Laguida, Mike Yamasaki, Len Inui.

It has been nine months since we started this process of prayer and reflection on the Constitutions and Rules, just the right number of months to give birth to a new baby! The Lord has been our guide and light along the way. He also assures us in the Gospel, "Ask and you will receive", "Seek and you will find", Knock and it will be opened". (Mt. 7:7) We ask what His will is for us today. We seek the way to live it. We knock on the door of the future - the future He has in store for us. "If God is on our side, who can ever stand against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

For the committee,

Ron LaFramboise, O.M.I.



**SUPERIOR GENERALIS**

MISSIONARIORUM OBLATORUM

B.M.V. IMMACULATAE

00165 Roma, February 20, 1982

Via Aurelia, 290

Tel. 6370251



Rev.Fr. Angelo SIANI, O.M.I.  
Provincial  
5-6-26 Honmachi  
Kochi 780  
JAPAN

Dear Father Siani,

With great joy, I heard that you will be having a Provincial Congress in March concerning the interiorization of the Constitutions and Rules. The text of the Constitutions and Rules -- I notice it on all my trips -- is becoming more and more a living food for all Oblates. A new Springtime is at our door. We must enter into it with much hope and zeal.

For Japan also, the moment of renewal has come, an evangelical renewal which begins with ourselves, with our own lives, and from there has a deep influence on the people.

Renewal in prayer, in community life, in support and fraternal love. "That they may be one so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17,21). Renewal also in announcing Jesus Christ. Never tire of searching for ways, ever more accessible and better adapted, by means of which we can tell people of each and every culture who Christ is.

I invite you to reflect during your Congress on three ideas which John Paul II recalled to the Bishops of Japan, on February 23, 1981, when he arrived in Tokyo:

1. The importance of prayer and the ministry of the Word: "For all of us -- and it is worth repeating time and time again -- the apostolic priorities of the priesthood are 'prayer and the ministry of the Word'" (Acts 6,4).
2. The need of promoting vocations: "The Gospel still has need of many witnesses. It is important that young people be given the opportunity to hear Christ's call. And

many of the young people, once they have heard and seen Jesus, will want to follow Him".

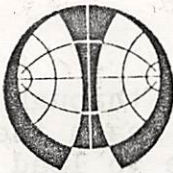
3. The will to persevere until the end, in confidence and joy: "Let us continue then, despite obstacles and setbacks, despite human weakness, to offer the Gospel freely and in its entirety. It is our contribution in the face of the loneliness of the world, it is our answer to the selfishness of man, to the lack of meaning that many people find in life, to the temptation to escapism, to lethargy and discouragement... In the name of Jesus, let us go forth confidently, and in the name of Mary, let us rejoice!"

Once again, I assure all my brother Oblates in Japan of my prayers and my sincere affection.

Devotedly yours in Our Lord and Mary Immaculate,

*Fernand Jetté, O.M.I.*

Fernand Jetté, O.M.I.  
Superior General



O. M. I.

Desmond O'Donnell, O.M.I.  
General Councillor.



My brother Oblates of Japan, I am privileged to offer you three considerations by way of encouragement before your approaching congress.

"God is ever at work in the world; his life-giving Word seeks to transform mankind, to build his People. We are instruments of that Word. We have to be open and flexible, learning how to respond better to new needs and how to find new answers, discerning all the while the movement of the Spirit who renews the face of the earth."

OMI Constitutions 26a

As Oblates we publicly profess to be engaged in God's work. To make sure we are doing this our Constitutions remind us that we have to be "instruments of God's Word," a Word which is always new. Thus for continual discernment and for openness and flexibility, the need is obvious. The congress will give each of you an opportunity to do this deeply in communion with your brother Oblates. And it is only when we have done this that we can finish our lives saying as Jesus did: "I have glorified you on earth and finished the work you gave me to do." (Jn 17:4)

"As individuals and as a community, we have the responsibility to seek the will of God. Decisions which express this will are best reached after prayerful discernment"

OMI Constitutions 62.

Each of us wants to live by the will of God- and so to have God with us- as expressed in this quote from our Constitutions. The coming congress is meant to be an exercise in this responsibility. It is only when we continue to search for God's will in our lives that we can be sure he is with us in our individual apostolates, as Jesus reminds us: "He who sent me is with me; he has not left me to myself, for I always do what pleases him." (Jn 8:29)

"In major decisions and in matters concerning the life and mission of the whole community, there will be a process of discernment conducive to consensus." Rule 20

At regular intervals in the life of each province, there is need to make such "major decisions" or at least to look at major orientations. This rule reminds us that these must be preceded by discernment. Here too we have another purpose of the congress. The life each of us leads, the actions we do and our growing knowledge of God will depend always on a discernment which results in wisdom and spiritual understanding. Here is how St.

Paul puts it: "... and what we ask God is that through perfect wisdom and spiritual understanding, you should reach the fullest knowledge of his will. So you will be able to lead the kind of life the Lord expects of you, a life acceptable to Him in all aspects; showing the results in all the good actions you do and increasing your knowledge of God." (Col 1:10)

These words express my hope and my prayer also, as I join you during the congress.

Desmond O'Donnell, OMI  
Regional Councillor



## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

### 1-Interplay of LIFE & MISSION

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c) Collective witness of Life and Mission:

Const. 21 "The Spirit prompted the first Christians to share everything. Under the influence of that same Spirit we hold all things in common. Our members adopt a simple life style, remembering that it is essential for our religious institute to give collective witness to evangelical detachment.

"We are to avoid all luxury, all appearance of luxury, all immoderate gain and accumulation of possessions. Subject to the common law of labour, and each in his own way contributing to the support of the community and its apostolate, we gladly accept the fact of not having at our disposal the comforts we might like."

Const. 36 "....By growing in unity of heart and mind, we bear witness before the world that Jesus lives in our midst and unites us in order to send us out to proclaim God's reign."

-What kind of image do we Oblates in Japan project?

Rich?	Poor?
United?	Disunited?
Real?	Fake?
Prayerful?	Prayerless?
Possessive?	Detached?

d) Mission and culture:

Const. 8: "We will ever be close to the people with whom we work, taking into account their values and aspirations. To seek out new ways for the Word of God to reach their hearts often calls for daring; to present Gospel demands in all clarity should never intimidate us...."

Rule 8 "....We must always be sensitive to the mentality of the people, drawing on the riches of their culture and religious traditions."

-What values and aspirations do I see in Japan that could be integrated into my life and into the life of the Christian community?

-How do I integrate them?

-How do we Oblates deepen our knowledge and appreciation of the riches of Japanese culture and Japanese religious traditions?

-What aspects of Japanese culture and religious traditions can be integrated into our lives and mission?

-Am I taking into account the values and aspirations of the people with whom I work?

MEETING



1982

Time      Schedule



PHASE 1: -District Meetings

Topic: Constitutions and Rules, Part One,  
-Chapter 1: "Mission"

Const. Art. 1 to 10 and Rule Art. 1 to 10

Time: September: Fukuoka (Leader Wency)  
Tokyo (Leader Ron )  
Kochi (Leader Ange )

October Tokushima (Leader Ron )

-Committee Meeting: in mid-October.

PHASE 2: -District Meetings

Topic: Constitutions and Rules, Part One,  
Chapter 2: "Apostolic Religious Life"  
-Section 1: "The Evangelical Counsels"

Const. Art. 11 to 29, Rule Art. 11-23

Time: November

-Committee Meeting: in early December

PHASE 3: -District Meetings

Topic: Constitutions and Rules, Part One,  
Chapter 2: "Apostolic Religious Life"  
-Section 2: "Living in Faith"  
Const. Art. 30-35, Rule Art. 24-29  
-Section 3: "Apostolic Community"  
Const. Art. 36-43, Rule Art. 30-36

Time: January

-Committee Meeting: early February

PHASE 4: Provincial Congress

Time: March 21 (Sunday PM) to March 24 (Wednesday noon)

Place: yet to be decided

\*\*The leaders will be the same for each of the three meetings. They will set the time and place of the district meeting in consultation with the men of the district. You are asked to have the meeting in the month assigned so that the coordination work by the committee can go on as scheduled.

## Outline for District Meeting

### A-Before the Meeting:

1. READ and PRAY over Const. 1-10 and Rules 1-10 from Chapter One: "Mission"

2. WRITE your own private notes and try to answer the following questions.

- a. What are the most important points for you in this section?
- b. What do you find most challenging to you personally in this section?
- c. What do you find most challenging in this section for the Province, here and today.

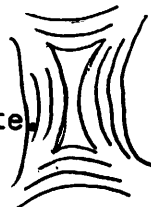
### B-During the Meeting:

1. READ and PRAY over the assigned section and the notes you made earlier, revising them if you want to.

2. SHARE with the members of your district on the 3 questions mentioned above.

3. PRAY

The period of sharing may include some brief questions of clarification, however this is not a period for discussion, debate, theorizing, sermonizing, philosophizing and the like. "Today, listen to the voice of the Lord...(Ps. 95)



PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

March 21-24, 1982

FUKUOKA



The meeting was called to order by the chairman, Ron LaFramboise, who proceeded to ask Ed Williams to lead the assembled members in prayer ( Gen. 12, 1-4 ). The chairman then called on the Provincial for his welcoming address and opening remarks in which Angelo expressed his gratitude to the Preparatory Committee . . . emphasized the importance of the Congress . . . and, reiterated the General's emphasis on the 'interiorization of the Constitutions and Rules' and 'renewal'. Angelo also explained why Des O'Donnell would be unable to attend the meeting.

Prefacing his remarks with the statement that 'these 2½ days are merely a continuation of what had been done, by way of preparation, on the district level', Ron then proposed a schedule and work-method which were immediately agreed upon. He proposed that, due to the pressure of time, the three themes based on district-level discussions and formulated by the Preparatory Committee should be dealt with in the following way: a) plenary session; b) group meetings ( at which one practical resolution would be formulated by each group for proposal to the congress); c) plenary session ( at which, the group resolutions and the process which led to their formulation would be considered; and d) one final plenary session at the end of the day to discuss the 6 resolutions ( 3 resolutions from each session, morning and afternoon ) in order for us to\* formulate one final resolution on the morning and afternoon themes.

MARCH 22 : MONDAY

9:00-9:15 AM PLENARY SESSION

- a) designation of members of the 3 groups
- b) introduction of the theme, viz., "Interplay of Life & Mission"

9:15-10:00 AM GROUP MEETINGS

Task: to formulate one practical resolution  
re "Interplay of Life & Mission"

10:00-11:00 AM PLENARY SESSION

- a) report by group-secretaries on the group meetings
- b) announcement of resolutions by group secretaries

REPORT: Group #3

The group's resolution was: to continue communications, to continue communicating at various levels. It was generally felt that, after listening to each member of the group express his insights which were often at variance with others' views, the only possible resolution would be 'to continue such sharing'.

REPORT: Group #2

The group's resolution was: to set aside specific times for individual and group reflection on the 'interplay of life & mission'. Some felt that a dichotomy does exist between the 'ideals' proposed by the Constitutions and Rules ( e.g., the call to 'radical' conversion and renewal ) and their personal lives. Others addressed the question of the dichotomy between 'apostolic works and the demands of authentic religious life,' and — most members of the group felt that there was no dichotomy. However, all agreed on the need to gather at specific times for reflection on the 'interplay of life & mission'.

REPORT: Group #1

No resolution was formulated. The discussion revolved, for the most part, around 'the religious community & its relationship to the individual's apostolate'. Other matters were also discussed, e.g., the issue of the dichotomy between one's own life-style and the 'radical call' of the Gospel as expressed in the Constitutions and Rules. And, because they were speaking on various levels about different 'dichotomies', it was felt that the group could not properly formulate a 'practical' resolution.

2 PM PLENARY SESSION

- a) the meeting was opened with a reading from Scripture ( John 17: 9ff. )
- b) "Life" was announced as the theme for the afternoon's session

2:15-3:00 PM GROUP MEETINGS

3:15-4:00 PM PLENARY SESSION

- a) presentation of resolutions formulated by each group

REPORT: Group #1

resolution: to support each other in and through meetings, letters, visits, phonecalls, newsletters and prayers, etc. - and - through such means to become more fully aware of Christ's living and acting in all members of the community. The key question leading to the formulation of this resolution was "how do I support the Oblates around me? And, how do they support me?" Most felt that it was easy to give support to and receive support from 'certain people' rather than to support and to receive support from 'other individuals'. Hence, the group felt the need to be aware of Christ's presence in all of our brothers and in the people He sends into our lives.

REPORT: Group #2

resolution: to establish some format that would enable us to offer and accept challenges/constructive criticisms of our 'life & mission'. During the discussion, it was noted that the Constitutions and Rules, retreats, and days of recollection, etc. could be better utilized as 'means of mutual support'. The group felt that we lacked the appropriate means and opportunities to communicate on a 'deeper' level which would include such dimensions as 'accountability' and constructive criticism.

REPORT: Group #3

resolution: to deepen our listening and talking by gathering for a meal and for all that precedes and follows a meal. The discussion seemed to center on 'the community as a source of joy & fulfillment' while recognizing its imperfections. Some felt that excessive formality hemmed us in and hindered us from sharing. By creating an informal atmosphere for sharing & listening, it is believed that the goal of 'mutual support' would be more naturally attained.

In the discussion that followed the secretaries' reports, there was a 'sharing' on the dynamics that would best facilitate 'mutual support'. The discussion revolved around the question of whether we are overly-structured or not, and whether we are too dependent on human techniques or not ( instead of basing our dependence on the Person of Christ ).... the implication being 'that we should be open to meeting each of our brothers in his life-situation -and- to be willing to share with him on his level'.

4:20-5:00 PM

The 5 resolutions on the 'Interplay of Life & Mission' ( 2 from the morning session and 3 from the afternoon session ) were proposed to the congress for consideration and possible revision. It was suggested that the 2 resolutions from the morning session be combined in the following manner: in order to continue communicating on various levels, we will set aside specific times for . . .

Afterwards, the secretary of Group #2 asked if all would be agreeable to a rephrasing of that group's afternoon resolution to eliminate any mis-

understandings which might arise from such terms as 'accountability' and 'constructive criticism'. Thereupon ensued a lively discussion, at the end of which the chairman proposed that the assembly postpone the formulating of any final resolutions till the following day and, in the meantime, meditate on these matters . . . to which proposal, the assembly agreed.

MARCH 23 : TUESDAY

9:00-9:15 AM PLENARY SESSION

- a) the meeting opened with a reading from Romans
- b) the chairman proposed that, since we were not able to formulate one single resolution on each of the two themes treated on Monday, a [REDACTED] committee should be formed ( Dick Bonang & Jose DeFruyt ) and that they be charged with formulating resolutions to be considered by the assembly, Wednesday morning. In order to facilitate the [REDACTED] committee's work and in order to draft resolutions which would reflect the consensus of the assembly, Jose asked that we write down & give to him or Dick our reflections on the resolutions proposed by the group secretaries, on Monday.
- c) the chairman proposed that we meet in longer group sessions ( 9:15-11:00 ) during which time each group would be expected to reflect on each of the two themes, viz., "Laymen" & "Collective Witness" and to make resolutions re these themes.

9:15-11:00 AM GROUP MEETINGS

11:05-11:55 AM PLENARY SESSION

- a) reports by secretaries on the group meetings

THEME II : "LAYMEN"  
REPORT : Group #1

resolution: after we become more aware of the charisms which each person has through Baptism, and are more willing to relegate these ministries to the baptized, we will make every effort to help these people discern the charisms each has received & to help them put these charisms into practice.

Basically, most members felt that they themselves did not really understand the nature of these ministries. They feel an inadequacy in trying to help the lay people discern their roles in the Church. Some felt the need to have a list of the possible ministries which are open to the laity. If such a list of ministries were drawn up, it may better enable us to help the laity to discern their proper roles of service. Others pointed out the need for the distinction between 'service within the Church' and 'service to the world' ( cf. Con. #6 ).

Furthermore, this discernment process, it was thought, should not be a 'mere' delegating of work by the priest...but rather, a 'real' searching with the person for that role of service.

REPORT : Group #2

resolution: to attend work-shops in our particular diocese or to help bring about work-shops that will lead us to a better understanding of

what direction we should take in this area of lay ministries.

The group spoke at length on the role of the priest as one who 'inspires & is inspired' . . . 'encourages & is encouraged' by the people; the role of the priest as a catalyst, not a manipulator. Members of the group emphasized the need on the part of the priest to 'observe', to look at the people in order to facilitate discernment and awareness of charisms. It was also felt that we should be more sensitive to the Japanese people's consciousness of 'hierarchy' and, thereby, assure the people that these ministries are 'official designations'.

One question treated by this group was: do we actually realize what these ministries are — and — are we ourselves open to them? One program of THE BETTER WORLD MOVEMENT was suggested as a means of 'educating us in this area' ( cf. details offered by Ray Bourgoi ).

#### REPORT : Group #3

resolution: to request that those people who are involved in co-operating with us in our apostolic works 'put into writing' for us some reflections on their roles, how they acquired such roles, how we might get others to become involved in similar roles, etc.

resolution (#2): to devise some means that would help us to become more clearly aware of what our priesthood actually means in relation to lay people, in present-day Church.

The group started its discussion by describing how lay people are being utilized in present Oblate apostolates. The feeling, that lay people themselves might better take the initiative and 'lead the priest' in this area, was also expressed.

#### THEME II "COLLECTIVE WITNESS"

##### REPORT : Group #1

resolution: to re-evaluate, both individually and collectively, our life-styles in light of the Gospel values.

The group discussed the various images which others have of the Oblates, as well as the image which each member of the group has of 'what we are'; such as, lacking continuity in our approach to a specific apostolate; being 'cool' toward one another; having a limitless/unlimited source of funds; living in a very secure world; and as being very 'foreign'. On the positive side, however, it was admitted that we are a group of hard-working, committed, and very dedicated individuals.

##### REPORT : Group #2

No resolution.

Due to such statements as . . . . "I would like to think that the image is a positive one, but" . . . or, . . . "I can't speak of a Provincial image, I can only speak of the image others have of us in our district" . . . or, . . . "I think it's impossible to project an Oblate image here in Japan" — and, finally, with other members of the group speaking of 'feedback' which was generally negative in tone ( e.g., disunity ), it was thought that, because of these factors, no resolution could be properly formulated and proposed to the assembly.

REPORT : Group #3

No resolution.

It was questioned whether the Oblates project any sort of image at all, or — whether this question about an Oblate image was relevant at all, precisely, because we are not known primarily as Oblates but as 'priests'. The term 'Oblate' is, generally speaking, not known by the people. There was also a discussion on 3c of the questionnaire and, according to the secretary, the group's view of our corporate image was as positive as it was negative, or, vice versa.

After the secretaries' reports, the chairman opened the floor to questions on or clarifications of the group resolutions/proposed resolutions. At this time, an observation was made that there seemed to be an over-emphasis on the Church-parish context, with the corresponding 'neglect' of other apostolates which were recognized by all at Mefu as having validity. This seemed to imply a need for more openness in discussing the significance of Con. #6.

N.B.

It should be noted that, during this PLENARY SESSION, each group-secretary reported on both themes before the next secretary presented his report. In these minutes, however, for the sake of clarity & continuity, the reports are recorded under the respective theme of "Laymen" or "Collective Witness".

2 PM PLENARY SESSION

- a) the meeting was opened with a reading from Scripture
- b) the chairman proposed that "Marginalized" & "Mission & Culture" be the themes for the extended afternoon session

2:15-4:00 PM GROUP MEETINGS

4:15-5:00 PM *Plenary session*

THEME I : "MARGINALIZED"

REPORT : Group #1

resolution: to seek out and accept those people who feel alienated and abandoned or those people who are outside the mainstream of Japanese society, seeing in these people the Living Christ.

The group started their discussion by listing all the possible categories of 'marginalized' people . . . concluding their discussion with Mother Theresa's observation that there are far more 'poor' people in America and Japan than she has ever seen in India.

REPORT : Group #2

resolution: to assess all of our involvements by the end of this year, in the light of Con. #5.

The discussion centered around the question of who the marginalized are. It was pointed out that the term 'marginalized' could even include Oblates, <sup>and</sup> Christians, as well as those who are obviously discriminated against. It could even include those who have 'marginalized' themselves, because of their own attitudes. Most members of the group

found it difficult to pinpoint who the 'marginalized' actually are. And, at the same time, it was felt that we might even contribute to the increase in the number of 'marginalized' by our failure to work in behalf of 'justice'. Furthermore, due to our unapproachableness ( because of life-style, etc. ), we might unknowingly contribute to this 'marginalization'. Some said that they are facing a dilemma, i.e., that the work which they are doing now prevents them from reaching out to those 'least touched by the Church'. It was a general feeling of the group that our 'mode of presence' was far more important than our 'place of presence' ( be it Honshu, Shikoku, or Kyushu ).

#### REPORT : Group #3

resolution: to contact, on the Provincial level, Canadian Oblate Provinces and inform them about what cooperative efforts may be made to re-settle in Canada refugees who are living in Japan.

resolution: to contact, on the Provincial level, Religious Superiors ( male & female ) re the possibility of establishing a half-way house for 'rehabilitated delinquents'.

In its discussion, the group first listed all the categories of 'marginalized' and then proceeded to discuss whether we as a Province are committed to the 'marginalized' or not. The conclusion was: we have not yet, as a Province, made any such effort to identify with these 'marginalized'. Then, the group discussed what actions in behalf of justice each member had taken in the past month.

#### THEME II "MISSION AND CULTURE"

##### REPORT : Group #1

resolution: to listen with open hearts to the aspirations, especially, the need for salvation — and — to relate to these needs in & through the indigenous values of the Japanese people.

The group discussed many such values in terms of a springboard for presenting Gospel values. One member of the group mentioned that he had been trying to reflect on the one fundamental aspiration, not only of the Japanese, but, of all men. He concluded that it has something to do with the concept of salvation, but salvation as something experienced here and now.

##### REPORT : Group #2

resolution: to dare to be evangelized by the society in which we live, i.e., that we strive to find values and aspirations in individuals and in the culture — that we try to discover values in Japanese culture which parallel Gospel values.

The discussion developed out of the recognition of a greater need to zero-in on all that is good in the Japanese culture, using this as a basis for leading the people to a sense of gratitude toward the One-Giver of all these gifts.

REPORT : Group #3

resolution: to encourage the Liturgical Committee ( of the Japanese Church ) to develop liturgies for the important events in the life of the Japanese people, such as: land blessings; liturgies & rites for the deceased; 'shichi-go-san'; New Year's, etc.

The main thrust of the discussion revolved around the absurdity and irony of our trying to 'japanize' a church which is comprised solely of Japanese people. The group found it extremely difficult to speak with any authority on the question of 'indigenization' or 'acculturation' or 'inculturation' ( with any expertise ).

N.B.

It should be noted that, during this PLENARY SESSION, each group-secretary reported on both themes before the next secretary presented his report. In these minutes, however, for the sake of clarity & continuity, the reports are recorded under the respective theme of "Marginalized" or "Mission & Culture".

MARCH 24. WEDNESDAY

The final session of the Congress started at 9 AM with a reading from Scripture — after which, the chairman passed out 2 worksheets for the assembly's consideration. The chairman, at that time, suggested that we work as one group till 11:45 AM.

The worksheets contained the resolutions which had been reworked by the Preparatory/Steering Committee and The Committee of Two ( Dick & Jose ). We were asked to further rework these resolutions for final draft. We were also asked to suggest ways of implementing the resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS #1 'Interplay of Life & Mission' and #2 'Life' were combined to read:

"In order to continue communicating on all levels of the Province, each district will set aside specific times for individual and group reflection and evaluation on the 'interplay of life & mission, and will notify other districts of such."

During this so-called 'brainstorming session', the following were suggested as ways of implementing this resolution:

- a) well prepared monthly retreats
- b) well prepared meals
- c) annual retreats
- d) annual Provincial gatherings

RESOLUTION #3 'Laymen' was accepted as proposed; with ways of implementation:

"We propose to take the following means to become more aware of the various ministries ( clerical & lay ) in the Church, as a step towards implementing Rule #6; namely, to send 3 men to the Better World Movement Seminar in Kyushu ( August 22-27 ); to look into Fr. Matsumoto's Study Program for Pastor & Parishioners; to avail ourselves of the report on the Asian Bishops' Conference in Hong Kong re Lay Ministries; to enlist the aid of a competent person in this field to lead us in a seminar; and, to make 'Laymen' the theme of our '83 Congress."

RESOLUTION #4 'Collective Witness' was revamped to read:  
"We re-dedicate ourselves to grow through re-evaluating our life styles in the light of Gospel values."

This final wording of the resolution, however, was only accepted after:

- a) clarification of the expression 'life style'
- b) an appeal that access to capital be submitted to community discernment
- c) a question about the actual 'witness' value of the vows
- d) clarification of <sup>the</sup> terms 'witness' & 'image'
- e) an appeal for 'detachment'
- f) a financial statement re expenses ( other than travel expenses )

RESOLUTION #5 'Marginalized' was accepted, after minor changes in the wording of the text. It reads as follows:

- "We propose the following ways to seek out and accept all people who feel alienated and abandoned, or who are outside the mainstream of Japanese society, seeing in these people the Living Christ:
- that by the end of this year we will begin the process of assessing our 'mode of presence' in our various commitments in the light of Con. #5.
  - that contact be made on the provincial level with Canadian Oblate Provinces, informing them of what they can do for re-settlement in Canada of refugees who are presently living in Japan ( especially, those in the Naruto Re-settlement Center )
  - that contact be made on the provincial level of male and female Religious Superiors re the possibility of establishing a half-way house for social rehabilitation."

This resolution was accepted after the following points were made:

- a) that we should investigate whether ~~such a half-way house already exists or not~~
- b) ~~(in reference to the above)~~ that no such half-way house exists
- c) that 'rehabilitated delinquents' ( the term which was used in the original resolution ) would be better expressed & understood by the term 'social rehabilitation'

RESOLUTION #6 'Mission and Culture' was reworded to read as follows:

"In the spirit of Con. #8 & Rule #8, we declare our willingness to be evangelized by the people with whom we work and live.

We will write to all the parishes in Japan asking them to send us any rites they may have for traditional cultural and religious activities, such as: jichinsai, house blessings, shichi-go-san, New Year's, and the various commemorative days of the deceased ( 7th day, hooji, ireisai, etc. )."

This resolution was accepted after the following points were made:

- a) that the church should be integrated into Japanese society

- b) that we sometimes forget to make the important distinction between 'religion' and 'Gospel'
- c) that it is not our present work in the parish which prevents us from reaching out to those least touched by the Church, but rather, our failure to appreciate the fact that the entire christian community ( not just the priest ) is/should be missionary-minded or missionary-oriented
- d) that non-christians who have not been subjected to the excesses of the Church can, oftentimes, teach us real christian values
- e) that the gratuitous 'giving' by the christian has significant witness value ( as opposed to 'giving out of giri' )
- f) that we should encourage the people to express their own basic religious feelings through their own cultural forms
- g) that we encourage the people to appreciate their own culture

The chairman thanked the assembly for its cooperation during the Congress and then turned the floor over to the Provincial for some closing remarks which may be summarized in the following way:

Fr. Siani once again thanked all for their participation and was also thankful that this group of Oblates came together to share with one another their deep personal commitment. The congress helped deepen our spiritual lives and strengthen our personal commitment to God and to one another.

Fr. Provincial then gave a summary of Fr. General's letter to the Japanese Province in which he stressed:

- 1) The importance of prayer and the ministry of the Word.
- 2) The need of promoting vocations.
- 3) The will to persevere until the end, in confidence and joy.

Fr. Siani also took the occasion to announce that Fr. Ron La Framboise had been asked by the council to prepare for his future role as Formator, and as such would attend the Congress on Evangelization to be held in Rome August 29 - September 15.

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS  
March 21-24, 1982

OPENING      REMARKS

by:

Fr. Angelo Siani, OMI  
Provincial

It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you to this Congress.

I would like to say a word of thanks to those who helped bring about this Congress. First, to the members of the committee; also to John Deely and Fran Hahn for accepting to be secretaries; to Jan Van Hoydonck for printing; Wency, Len and Mike for taking charge of leisure and Ron for accepting the difficult task of chairman.

The first task set before us since the General Chapter of 1980 is the work of interiorization of the Rules and Constitutions, what Father General called a "second conversion." In his homily on February 17, 1980, he said, "A second conversion is often more painful than the first because it penetrates to greater depths. It draws us out of attitudes and habits that are more firmly rooted, and it reveals to us our attachment to our own self and will, that we may never have suspected. If we want to put the Rules and Constitutions into serious practice, we will be called to make choices, difficult choices not only in regard to our works but first of all in regard to our way of seeing things and to deepen our commitment to the values expressed in our rule and the call to deepen our desire to give our lives totally to the service of the gospel.

We need therefore a spirit of prayer. We should realize we are men of prayer, looking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We need a sense of the importance of what we are doing here, for what we do here will have consequences on our mission for good or otherwise for years. If we work well it will certainly be a step forward for the mission and our work will produce an effect in the people to whom we are sent to bring the good news.

So we are not here only for ourselves but for the congregation, our community and for those with whom we work.

It is good and necessary for us to get together as Oblates. I am convinced that here in Japan our life and our work are directly influenced by the quality of our community life. I am aware that many find community with those with whom they work and this is necessary... to be attached to our people for then we are close to Christ who came to serve. Yet still we need Oblate time together... time for learning acceptance, get-

ting rid of prejudices, showing concern and growing together. I don't think it's a waste of time for us to be together for we achieve unity in our life only in and through Jesus Christ.

In the task which lies ahead of us in these few days, the big red-letter word is mission, Christ invites us to follow him and to share in His mission. We are not here merely for self fulfillment but to be a cooperator in the work of Christ, therefore, we are missioned by the Church through the congregation.

The hope is that we will come up with some concrete recommendations for the council for something we will commit ourselves to as a missionary community, because we feel it is important for us now. It is only important that we be together with open minds, open hearts and open ears, to listen to what the Spirit is calling us today. What is the Spirit prodding us to? If indeed the Spirit is active in our world and in our conscience, to refuse attention to those promptings is to remain closed in on ourselves and so to sin against that Spirit. To be open, to listen, wherever the Spirit moves, is to grasp hope for the O.M.I.'s to become what they can be!

## Proposed Resolutions

### 1-Interplay of Life and Mission:

In order to keep communications going on all levels of the the Province, we will set aside the following specific times for individual and group reflection and evaluation on the interplay of life and mission.

### 2-Life:

Through all kinds of communication and mutual support we become more aware of Christ living in all the members of the community. We also feel the need to be constructively challenged and the necessity of accountability.

We also feel the need to deepen the quality of our communication and community gatherings.

However, in this context our deepest need is to sustain and vigorously keep alive a Christ-centeredness.

We propose therefore, to remind ourselves over and over again that a Christ-centered atmosphere which fosters mutual trust and respect, as well as growth, support and understanding should be sustained.

### 3-Laymen:

We propose to take the following means to become more aware of the various ministries (clerical and lay) in the modern church, as a step towards implementing Rule 6.

### 4-Collective Witness:

We propose both individually and collectively to re-evaluate our life styles in the light of Gospel values....

### 5-Marginalized:

We propose the following ways to seek out and accept all people who feel alienated and abandoned, or who are outside the mainstream of Japanese society, seeing in these people the living Christ .

- That by the end of this year we will begin the process of assessing our mode of presence in our various commitments in the light of Const. 5.

- That contact be made on the provincial level with Canadian Oblate Provinces informing them of what they can do for re-settlement in Canada of refugees that are presently living in Japan.

(Resolutions p. 2)

-That contact be made on the Provincial level with the male and female religious superiors as to the possibility of establishing a half-way house for rehabilitated delinquents.

6-Mission and Culture:

In the spirit of Const. 8 and Rule 8 we declare our willingness to be evangelized by the society in which we live, and propose to do so by.....

And furthermore we will write to all the parishes in Japan asking them to send us any rites they have for traditional cultural and religious activities such as, jichinsai, house blessings, shichigosan, New year's, and the various commemorative days of the dead (7th day, hooji, ireisai, etc.)